Published using Google Docs Report abuse Learn more

PLAYTEST CONTENT

Hello! This is Playtest Content! As such, it might change in time, this is **not a final release**. There'll be channels to give feedback on this article and future articles soon!

DISCLAIMER: This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of its author.
This product is a work of fiction.

The Soul Incarnate

A Pointy Hat Monk Lich

Out of every ritual to become a lich, the one reserved for the soul incarnate is the hardest.
It all starts with meditation, years of it, enough so the monk has perfect and total control of their ki, then, the ritual can start. The monk must find and cultivate a plant. The specific plant varies by monastic tradition, but its broad effects remain the same. When consumed as tea, the brew dries the body from within, slowly purging it from all liquid. Once the monk finds this plant and procures themselves with a steady supply of it, the monk will then limit their ingestion of solid foods until all they consume is the tea.
It's at this stage of the ritual that the monk's control of ki will play a key role in whether the monk survives the ritual or doesn't.

The monk will find a place. A heavily fortified monastery, a secluded mountain, the center of an impregnable labyrinth, whatever they decide is the best location to lay their body, but not themselves, to rest.
Traditionally, other monks will accompany the soul incarnate to assist them but most importantly to bear witness to a potentially successful ritual. Though the methods vary, the tradition stipulates that the monk will bury themselves down a shaft that has been excavated 6 feet or more underground in a wooden box just tall enough to accommodate them kneeling, and there, the monk will wait with one final cup of tea. This will be the last meal the monk will ever take, regardless of the outcome of the ritual.

Most hopeful soul incarnate will die at this point, for what they are about to attempt has only been successfully performed a number of times in the single digits throughout recorded history. The monk must find a way to sustain themselves through ki alone. They must turn their body and their mind into a perpetual motion machine, a perfect circuit that requires no energy source from the outside world to continue operating. The truest form of the concept of transcendence: complete transcendence from sustenance, from nourishment, from life and death.

Once a day, the other monks will use a bell tied to a string that goes all the way down into the monk's box to check on the monk. If the bell rings, the monk is still alive. Once the bell rings no more, the retinue of monks will wait a month, long enough for the body of a dead monk to decompose, and finally unearth the box. In the impossibly rare event that the monk not only died, but managed to find a way to achieve undeath, the creature that will rise out of the box is no longer a monk, but a soul incarnate. Except, it won't be its body that rises, but its ki alone.

The drying effect of the tea had a second goal. a mummifying one. A successful soul incarnate has managed to suspend their own body in a state of perfect stasis, and turn it into a phylactery, which it will hide and protect in their chosen location while their ki is free to roam the earth.
A soul incarnate is the only lich that manifests and acts upon the world as an ethereal undead, rather than a corporeal one. They manifest in a form that reflects the one they had in life, and not like the desiccated corpse that most other liches resemble, except this form is not physical. The soul incarnate is at all times perfectly between the ethereal and the material, as signified by its gaseous, unearthly appearance. It's "body" is literally made of Ki, as signified by the glowing meridians that are visible through its form. In it's Ki form it is weaker than other liches, but if someone finds its phylactery and tries to destroy it, the Ki form will possess its former body, revealing the true strength of the soul incarnate to those that dare try to end its unlife. One might think that it's the soul incarnate's appearance that truly distinguishes it from other liches, but this is not the true difference between these undead and the rest. The soul incarnate, unlike its brethren, doesn't need any form of sustenance.

The ritual to become a soul incarnate is, without a doubt, the hardest and most dangerous one, but the rewards match the difficulty of the execution of the ritual. A soul incarnate has achieved total transcendence, and therefore does not need the souls of others to continue its undeath, its phylactery is a perpetual machine, and its control of ki is so great that it allows the lich to forgo the need for sustenance. It could theoretically live forever if it so chooses. Some soul incarnates act as undying leaders of millenia-old monasteries, preserving the monastic traditions and passing on their knowledge to new initiates, and famous examples of good natured or at least non violent soul incarnates do exist, but there are just as many examples of soul incarnates that completely lose the inherent connection that binds all mortal beings, more than any other lich since their particular undeath allows them to never interact with the living. Other liches must interact with the living, even if it is to kill them, soul incarnates can turn hermit, ignoring them forever. These soul incarnates turn into a completely different type of monster, one with the wisdom granted by millenia of meditation and the callous power given by a complete disregard or even contempt for the lives of the living. Much like one doesn't concern themselves with the wants and needs of the ants they step on, the soul incarnate doesn't concern itself with the hopes of the living. The most terrifying aspect of soul incarnate is how many of them were caring and wise for centuries before becoming jaded and monstrously inhuman as they kept on existing through the ages.

SOUL INCARNATE - Ki Form

Medium Undead

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +10
Skills History +5, Insight +9, Perception +9
Damage Resistances Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder, Necrotic
Damage Immunities Poison; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Grappled, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Prone, Restrained
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Understands all spoken languages and can communicate with any creature that can understand a language
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +5

Drain Ki. Whenever a creature drops to 0 hit points within 30 feet of the soul incarnate, the soul incarnate regains one ki point and that creature makes its next death saving throw with disadvantage.

Evasion. When the soul incarnate is subjected to any effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it takes no damage when it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half if it fails.

Incarnation. If the soul incarnate's body phylactery is still intact, a destroyed soul incarnate's ki coalesces in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and uses of ki abilities. The new Soul Incarnate appears within 5 feet of the body phylactery.

Incorporeal Movement. The soul incarnate can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Ki. The soul incarnate has a pool of 15 ki points. It can expend a number of these to take a specific action, bonus action, or reaction that consumes a number of ki points. All actions that consume Ki points have the number of ki points they consume in the name of the action.
You can use the tracker below every time the soul incarnate expends a ki point:
O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O
The soul incarnate regains all ki points at the end of a long rest.

Ki-Empowered. The soul incarnate's attacks are considered magical for the purpose of overcoming resistances and immunities.

Magic Resistance. The soul incarnate has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Turn Resistance. The soul incarnate has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The soul incarnate makes four attacks. Two with its quarterstaff and two unarmed strikes.

Longstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) force damage.

Bonus Actions

Empty Body (3 Ki points). The soul incarnate becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.

Flurry of Blows (1 Ki Point). The soul incarnate makes two additional unarmed strikes attacks as part of its attack action.

Patient Defense (1 Ki Point). The soul incarnate takes the Dodge action as a bonus action.

Step of the Wind (1 Ki Point). The soul incarnate takes the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action.

Reactions

Deflect Missiles (1 Ki Point). The soul incarnate deflects any ranged weapon attack or spell attack, reducing the damage by 1d10 + 15. If the deflected attack was a ranged weapon attack and its damage is reduced to 0, the soul incarnate sends the projectile back, immediately making an unarmed strike attack against the creature that attacked it (ignoring range restrictions on unarmed strike attacks).

License

Creative Commons

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 ("SRD 5.1") by Wizards of the Coast LLC and available at https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode.